

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby
we may
edify one
another.



John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

**December
10
2017**

CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH

by Jim Stauffer

The most well known Scripture in all the Bible has to be **John 3:16**, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* It is imperative that we understand salvation represents redemption from the clutches of Satan who has trapped us in sin (**Heb. 2:14,15; Eph. 2:1,2**). Therefore, those who are in the church of the Lord came from the world. Maybe that is part of the general animus the world has for the church, but it seems they would recognize those in the church have been *....called out of darkness (the world) into His marvelous light (1 Pe. 2:9).*

This salvation we speak of brings about the very idea of church. We are introduced to this idea in the very beginning of the preaching of the gospel when Peter answers the request of some 3000 souls who asked, *Men and brethren what shall we do? (Acts 2:37)* Peter said to them, *Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)* Then we are told in **verse 41**, *those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.* Then in **verse 47** we learn these souls were being added to the church.

The very fact that Jesus' plan and promise was to build His church, His kingdom, is evident from so many passages in the Bible, the most explicit being **Mat. 16:18**. The evidence of love comes when we learn how He chose to provide the salvation that results in one being added to His church. Christ purchased the church with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**) and that blood was shed for the sins of all mankind (**2 Cor. 5:14,15**). Salvation is explained in this text as being reconciled to God. **2 Cor. 5:18** *Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not*

counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. This reconciliation eliminates the separation between man and God that resulted from his sin (**Isa. 59:1,2**).

So, when Paul parallels the love of Christ for the church with the love a man has for his wife (**Eph. 5:25**), he explains it by saying, *...He gave Himself up for her.* The church is what Christ died for and it is composed of those who are willing to sacrifice self for Him. He tells us a man must give up his life, that is *deny himself* in order to receive the life Jesus offers. *... "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Mat. 16:24-26)*. Paul defines this same person this way, **Rom. 12:1** *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Understand this about the church. Christ loves it, He died for it, it is an eternal kingdom established to house those who will follow in His steps. There is no other plan God has for the salvation of men (**Acts 4:11,12**). God started over when men became so evil He flooded the earth and saved only Noah, his wife and his three sons and their wives. He developed His own people in Israel and yet never planned for that to be the salvation of mankind. He promises both a Messiah and a new kingdom and covenant that would provide for man's salvation (**Isa. 9:6,7; 2:2-4; Jer. 31:31-34**). Paul explains the Old Covenant with the people of Israel was a *...tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. (Gal. 3:24)* We are further taught this same principle when Paul declares it is not one who is born of the flesh as a descendant of Abraham, but rather one who is born of the promise, that is of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and then Christ (**Rom. 9:8; Gal. 3:16**).

The church then is the collection of those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus, hearing His word and trusting in His promises to the point they sacrifice any and all things to be in harmony with His teaching. The church worships as Jesus has revealed it should. It does not worship according to its own feelings. It does the work Jesus has commanded, it does not do things it thinks would be a “good idea”. Those in the church have been saved by the blood of Jesus according to His commands to repent and be baptized after confessing Christ as the Son of God and Lord of their lives.

Is this true of you and the church of which you are a member and with whom you worship? If not, you need to seek out the church Jesus died to save.

Grace Given to Each Studies in Ephesians 4:6-11

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (**Romans 1:16**). Jesus did not leave the gospel to be broadcast in some mysterious way; He rather gave gifts to men to accomplish this; and He enumerated them: **First**, *“he gave the apostles”* An apostle is “one sent with a message.” In context of replacing Judas, Peter announced the qualifications of apostles of Christ with these words: *“So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day when he was taken up from us – one of these must become with us a witness to his resurrection”* (**Acts 1:21-22**).

There were twelve original apostles. Judas fell away, and was replaced by Matthias. Saul of Tarsus (who described himself as *“one untimely born”*) later was added to become the apostle to the Gentiles (**Acts 15:9**). Early Christians *“devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching ...”*; and so do Christians today, the only difference being that they had inspiration in men and we today have inspiration in a book (thank you, Elmer). Jesus said to the apostles, *“the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you”* (**John 14:26**).

Next, *“the prophets.”* A prophet was a fore-teller, but more than that a forth-teller. Prophets were more prominent in the Old Testament, as indicated by **Hebrews 1:1**; but prophets continued to work as evidenced in the New Testament (**Acts 21:9**). In terms of the work they did, the apostles and prophets remain with us.

Then *“evangelists.”* An evangelist is a gospel preacher. He may be a preacher who travels from place to place, like Philip (**Acts 21:8**); or, he may be in local work, as Timothy (**2 Timothy 4:5**; **1 Timothy 1:3**).

Some are troubled by a mere local preacher identifying himself as an evangelist – but such he is.

“Pastors” – the denominational world has lost the true sense of the word completely. They identify the man who preaches as “pastor” - and then whisk away the authority bestowed on pastors by Jesus.

Pastors are ordained by God. A pastor is a shepherd, and he is charged to take heed to the flock (**Ac. 20:28**). Just as a shepherd dominates and provides for his flock, so the pastors of a local church take heed to the sheep of which the church is composed.

This is an area which needs scrupulous definition. In **Acts 20**, **verse seventeen** identifies the people to whom Paul is speaking as the elders of the church in Ephesus. He is still speaking to these elders when in **verse 28** he says, *“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood.”* Look at it: in these two verses Paul addresses the elders (**verse 17**) and in **verse 28** calls them pastors (“attention to the flock”) and bishops (“overseers”). The same combination is found in **First Peter 5:1-2**.

The apostolic order called for a plurality of elders in every church, *“And when they had appointed for them elders in every church ...”* (**Acts 14:23**). It is appropriate here to deplore the lamentable indifference toward elders and their appointment and their work today. The attitude toward authority observed in this area mirrors the anarchic spirit in society shown today with respect to law and order in so many places. It should not be so.

Apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors are all supposed to teach, but additionally all Christians, then and now, are obliged to teach as they have opportunity.

When these gifts were first bestowed, most of the recipients were endowed supernaturally --- the New Testament was not written, and the messages offered by men to whom the Spirit gave utterance needed certification (**confer Acts 8:6, et al**). The teachers under view in **Ephesians four** taught the word of God. The teachers under view today must also teach the word of God. Jesus made that possible.

Pat Farish | Waxachie, Texas, USA; Taken from Meditate on These Things August 2017

(Editor’s Note: These points concerning the proper use of biblical terms that refer to biblical responsibilities have been misused for hundreds of years in the denominations in existence. It is no wonder there is religious division in the world when men refuse to acknowledge the authority of God to name and assign roles to men who serve in His kingdom.)

Sprinkling is NOT Baptism!

One of the best tools a person can have when studying the Scriptures for themselves is a quality English Dictionary. When you run into a word for which you do not know the meaning you can look it up and clear the air. It is just a good commonsense practice – but it is not foolproof. You see an English dictionary give us the meaning of English words as they are used in the English speaking world today, which is great if the speaker is a contemporary English speaker, but none of the Bible speakers were. English was not a language for almost a thousand years after Bible times.

For example my dictionary defines baptism as: “1. The ceremony or rite of admitting a person into a Christian Church by dipping him in water or sprinkling water on him”. It gives the impression that sprinkling is baptism. It is not. In the justification forward of the definition before the first definition they say [OFr<L.<Gr.<’baptizein’, ‘to immerse’]” That last word ‘baptizein’ is the actual Greek word used throughout the scriptures and is translated ‘to baptize’. This goes well with **Acts 8:38f**, *“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.”* That is a word picture of full immersion. See also **John 3:23** where baptism requires *“much water”*. Last I checked sprinkling requires very little water at all.

If we are going to claim to be following the Lord then we dare not substitute our own ideas for what Jesus and the Apostles very plainly said by the words they used.

Cleveland Reddinger

Missing In Action

Joel Hamm

The first week after his inauguration as President of the United States, a member of his cabinet insisted on an urgent meeting at 10:00 Sunday morning to handle a threatened national crisis. President James A. Garfield refused to attend because he had a more important appointment. The cabinet member demanded to know what it was. The president replied, “I will be as frank as you are. My engagement is with the Lord to meet Him in His house at His table at 10:00 tomorrow, and I shall be there.”

How do you feel when you miss an important meeting? How about an appointment that has been scheduled for some time? How does it feel to miss one of your children’s ballgames that you have been looking forward to? Usually, there is a sense of failure or disappointment to some extent on our part. Maybe it is just a little remorse or maybe it actually makes you feel bad, you know in the “pit of our stomach” as we say

sometimes.

How about when we miss our appointment with the Lord to learn about His Will guiding our lives. Do we carry on our normal activities as if nothing is wrong? Or do we exchange that time with keeping ourselves busy so that our mind is distracted from where we know we should be? **1 Thessalonians 5:11** tells us to *“encourage one another and build up one another”*. Seems to me that would be hard to do if you are not assembling with the saints on a regular basis.

Now I know what you’re thinking - here we go with the “forsaking the assembly” talk. Let me be clear. I’m not referring to being sick. I’m not referring to having to work. I’m not referring to unforeseen circumstances that prohibit you from making it to services occasionally. I am talking about making a decision to not attend services.

Philippians 2 says *“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tenderness and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than himself. Look not every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”* Have you ever really stopped to think about the effects of not attending services on other people? I don’t know about you, but I can’t think of a better place to find consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, tenderness, joy, and love than with meeting with the saints at my local congregation. But if I’m not there, I can’t do these things. And if you’re not there, we can’t reciprocate these blessings. You see, every joint supplies and causes the *“growth of the body for the building up of itself in love”* - **Ephesians 4:16**.

So what are some other results of missing services on other people? How about worry? When a brother or sister misses services, it should and does cause concern from other members. Are they sick? Are they struggling spiritually? Do they have problems with family or work that they need help with but don’t know who to ask for help? I don’t know about you, but I have found that there is a fine line between “genuine concern” and “meddling” with some people. If I tell you I have missed you at services, it does not mean I’m mad at you or even wondering what you were doing or why you missed... it simply means I’m concerned and in a way, asking “Is there anything I can help with?” Again, some people simply don’t want you to know all their problems. May we all strive to increase in our faithfulness to the Lord and to His Church so that we might increase our brotherly kindness, knowledge, and love so that we are never found “Missing in Action.”

Taken from the Market Street Messenger

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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WEDNESDAY**

**ISLAM VS. CHRISTIANITY
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER**

**SUNDAY SERMON: THE DESIGN
AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10